

Matter of Fact By Joseph Alsop

Nixon's Task

CHICAGO—Like the Democrats, the Republicans have now nominated a truly formidable ticket.

The way Richard M. Nixon has handled himself, and this convention, too, in these last few days is proof enough, if proof be needed, of his capacities. He has shown daring courage, cool good judgment and extreme touchness, all at once. He has rejected both the paleolithic brand of Republicanism, and the much more pernicious soothing-syrup brand.



Alsop

In fact, Nixon has taken the ideal posture for what should be the most stirring national debate of this century, and he has demonstrated that he has the stature the debate will demand. In Henry Cabot Lodge, he has also chosen a running mate of quality and stature, who was the obviously ideal Vice Presidential nominee.

The foregoing paragraphs sound a bit like one of the "man-who" speeches that are customary rites at such times as this. But they are necessary, as introduction to an estimate of Richard Nixon's task. You have to look at the man who is going to do the job before you look at the job. Otherwise you might conclude the job could not be done at all, which would be a grave mistake at this stage.

THE BEST currently available measure of the job's difficulties is provided by the elaborate sampling made on behalf of Nelson Rockefeller by the Joseph Bacheider organization of Princeton, N. J. That sample was taken on the

Saturday and Sunday after the Democratic convention. There was much derision when fragmentary results of this sample were foolishly published here by the Draft-Rockefeller enthusiasts. But the derision was quite unjustified.

To begin with, the Bacheider sample, taken on the Gallup system, was impressively big. It included nearly 4500 polees, or three times the usual Gallup sample. The polees were pro-rated among the five states tested, which were New York, Illinois, Pennsylvania, California and Texas. The pattern revealed was remarkably consistent. John F. Kennedy led Nixon, just about 60-40, among the people who thought they already knew how they would vote in November. And the undecided polees were about a quarter of the total in all five states.

THE STOS LEAD for Kennedy is had news for Nixon, but the hitherto unpublished figures showing the composition of the Kennedy lead are still worse news. New York state gave the median result of the five states polled; so here are the New York figures in full detail.

Among each hundred New York polees, Kennedy was supported by 42, Nixon got the votes of 23, and 23 were undecided. Among each hundred New York polees who had voted for Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1956, Kennedy was now chosen by 30, Nixon by 42, and 22 were undecided. Among each hundred who had voted for Adlai Stevenson, Kennedy got the votes of 31, Nixon got only 2, and 17 were undecided. And among those who had not previously voted — namely young people — Kennedy got 45, Nixon 17, and undecided 38.

IN ADDITION, Kennedy won the support of 30 per cent of the Protestant polees in New York, got 53 per cent of the Catholics and took 59 per cent of the Jewish votes. The comparable percentage for Nixon were Protestant, 46, Catholic, 20, and Jewish, 17. The rest, of course, were again undecided. It is hard to say whether the religious breakdown of the breakdown by previous votes contains worse auguries for the Republicans.

It can be stated, additionally, that the results of the Bacheider sample were not dramatically different from the results of almost simultaneous samplings ordered by Nixon himself, to test Vice Presidential possibilities. In these tests, which showed Lodge running very heavily as well as Nelson Rockefeller, there were a few divergences of real interest. For instance, Nixon ran a little behind in California, but he did not run a mile behind, as in the Bacheider test. All the same, the over-all story was again sharply discouraging.

One must add that there is bound to be an important pick up for Nixon after Chicago, just as there was a pick up for Kennedy after Los Angeles. But it will be extremely surprising if this post-convention pick up is sufficient to show the two contenders rushing even with one another as the race officially begins.

If Nixon starts the race behind, and perhaps rather far behind, the outcome remains wholly uncertain, however. For Nixon, like Kennedy, is a special sort of racer. The horse-players might have seen a race of this year with this election, if Willie Daner and Man O' War had both been born in the same year.

